Organizational Memory towards School Customs Constructing

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Abstract

School custom is the base of its sustainable development ability. Addressing the present dilemma of constructing the school customs, the paper argued school organizational knowledge is the core of the school customs, and it presented a model of school organizational memory mechanism. According to the mechanism, the paper described some important and effective ways to construct school customs. Finally, the paper proposed two strategies which should be concerned in school custom research and practice.

1. Introduction

School custom has been widely recognized as a vital factor in school and its development and a source of school competitiveness. So, this article thought it is necessary and urgent to speed up and promote the school custom formation and development from a new perspective. Moreover the research about organizational knowledge (OK), organizational memory (OM) and information technology thorough development in recent years also provides a good chance for researching and discussing the school custom formation and development mechanism.

As the mature school custom, it is inevitably school education style and cultural custom which develops and accumulates in school long-term education practice[1], including schooling idea, curriculum design, teaching characteristic, management methods, experience, rules and regulations and other cultural custom and so on, in which teaching characteristic is principal aspect in school custom[2]. From the definition of school custom, these statements are all right, but they do nothing about how to promote the school custom effectively.

Otherwise, any organization can gradually form its own OK or organizational cultures, e.g. organization's rule, procedure, convention, culture. They exist in individuals, groups, the entire organization, flowing along with organizational member’s communication [3]. School is special knowledge producing organization via managing complex human resources. While disseminating various kinds of knowledge and skills to students, it will form some rules, procedures, conventions as well as the culture on how to teach effectively. It is usually called schooling ideas, curriculum designing, teaching characteristic as well as the school rules and regulations and so on. Therefore, school OK is the core of school custom, the process of accumulating and developing school OK is certainly the process of school custom construction.

Understanding school custom with OK, it not only reflects its intrinsic characteristics, but also is a new and operational way to promote and cultivate school custom effectively. Just as the acquisition of individual knowledge relies on information processing, especially individual memory ability, the acquisition of OK also depends on OM, which shows the organization’s abilities to process, accumulate and use its internal information and knowledge[4]. The term OM is concerned about how organizations collect, store and provide access to experiences, skills and know-how [5]. Therefore, school custom construction should not only pay attention to principal’s schooling thoughts and ideas. School organization information processing ability (OM) should be enhanced and improved to establish the school custom developing mechanism.

Although the advance of OK and OM has no direct relation to information technology, it is effective utilization of information technology that bringing more effective storage and management of OK. OM mechanism can be found in concrete carrier. In order to facilitate school custom constructing, school OM mechanism construction and information technology effective utilization should be paid more attentions.
2. Constructing School OM Model

As a knowledge dissemination organization, school produces massive unique and personalized pedagogical knowledge, which contains various tacit and explicit teaching knowledge. Only lets such knowledge spread in a wider range, can it become the all teachers’ knowledge and teaching ability; then it can form suited custom for school and students, and also can avoid the traditional breaking for teacher draining.

Therefore establishing OM mechanism, realizing maximally mining and using internal OK is a vital task for constructing school custom and speeding it up. Therefore, OM information processing cognition structural model can be constructed using the metaphor of human learning and memory information process [6]. Under information technology environment, the paper takes the human information processing model as a prototype, and constructs a model of school OM mechanism demonstrated in Figure 1.

![Fig. 1 Model of School OM Mechanism](image)

In this model, interactions between individual knowledge and OK are the core of OM mechanism, which poses different levels of closed loop. It follows the basic process as knowledge acquisition, storage, processing and utilization. This model has indicated several key points of school OM.

Firstly, individual knowledge is the direct origin of OK. In fact, external knowledge or information can only be transformed into OM process through individual processing. Meanwhile, only when transforming OK into individual knowledge and having influence on his behaviors, may OK goals be achieved and be integrated into school customs. So individual knowledge is not only the beginning of school OM mechanism but also is its end.

Secondly, like Figure.1 shows that OK formation may have many stages: (1) from individual knowledge to individual public statement is OK register process, similarly to human sensory register stage. (2) Converting individual public statement to organization public statement is a key stage of OK process. When individual knowledge receives others’ attentions, it will be on organizational level, probably entering into other individual work memory. (3) Negotiation and comprehension are depth processing of OK, such as reflection or practice via individuals, groups and organization. In essence, it is individual internalization process. When organizational members consult each other, discussing organizational public statement, final agreement may be accepted by majority members (i.e. become individual knowledge), then OK will produce.

As process goes on in the direction marked by the hollow arrows (Fig.1), information is reduced slowly, which is just like the situation of human memory process. Thereby, school OM is effective processes to prevent OK lost and decay.

Thirdly, Fig.1 also pointed out the most important mechanisms need to be resolved among the process between each stage, such as describe and express, concern and compare, negotiate and comprehend. Moreover, only under the circumstance of information technology, can these mechanisms run more efficiently and guarantee knowledge transforming in a high speed. For instance, information dissemination tool makes individual public statement way and knowledge storing style change revolutionarily. They enhance knowledge transformation efficiency. Moreover, intelligent agent, information pushing and subscription service, e.g. Tag, RSS, web search tool and so on, may greatly enhance the knowledge diffuse rate, also prompt the members’ sensitive and reactive to new knowledge and statement. This brings large prompt OK and school custom development.

Finally, just like individual needs execution control system to adjust his information processing process, OM also needs execution control system — — management and motivation mechanism. It mainly composes of school idea as well as corresponding management system, rules and regulations and so on.

3. School custom constructing strategies based on OM

School OM system provides a good framework for school custom constructing and combining teaching reform, school management, school-based training, information technology, etc. So, OM has become a core in school custom and sustainable competition. Here two aspects should be paid special attentions.

3.1 Building technology support system

School custom support system must be able to uphold knowledge storage and processing in individual,
group (including formal group and informal group) and school levels. The functions like ‘describe and express’, ‘concern and compare’ and ‘negotiate and comprehend’ mentioned in Fig.1 should be converted into system’s basic structures. Specifically, message board, BBS or BLOG can directly express individual’s experiences, feelings and kinds of school regulations, while we can develop information push and selection tools by Tag, RSS and search engine. It has many advantages in keeping members’ sensitivity towards new knowledge and prevalence of them. WIKI as well as IMS etc. can support groups or the whole school members to discuss and cooperate in many ways. Thus schooling ideas, valuable experience accumulated by teachers, new external knowledge and so on can be absorbed more easily. In help of Web2.0, every member’s activities may become a part of school OK and school custom.

3.2 Designing school management and motivation system

Human being’s information processing is adjusted by the execution system of metacognition, and OM also needs similar supervision and control mechanism like metacognition. Management and motivation mechanism shown in Fig.1 can take on this function. From the views of school custom construction, schooling ideas and their relevant management system and regulations must be able to monitor and guarantee the exertion of school OM as well as normal performance of OM network support system. Further, relevant teaching activities can be set on the base of knowledge transition flow and facilitating OK producing.

The main storage of knowledge in organization lies in individual. Every teacher, even a student, contains knowledge needed in the process of school custom shaping. On the other hand, individual’s performances and activities are the final presentation of the school custom; then, it is important to motivate members’ participation enthusiasm. Because of taking the accumulation of OK as a routine of school management are regarded as very important factor in school custom constructing. Because only teachers’ development can be the final and the most important sources of school OK, motivation mechanism should be established to satisfy the needs of teachers’ achievement and development, and to encourage teachers to share their own knowledge and experience with others. The network support system must satisfy the needs of teachers’ routine work, learning and knowledge sharing, and make each teacher’s activity become the process of whole school custom automatically with the help of the system.

4. Summary

Construction of school custom involves many problems. The paper only discusses some issues and strategies on how to develop and perfect school custom constructing through establishment of OM mechanism. It aims to accelerate school custom formation through exploitation and utilization of school OK. As a new research paradigm and implement strategy, we need further discussion and practice. If the paper could arouse your attention on relation between OM mechanism and school custom, and involve you in more complicated theoretical thinking about school custom constructing, the paper’s purpose is achieved.

5. Reference


